THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU

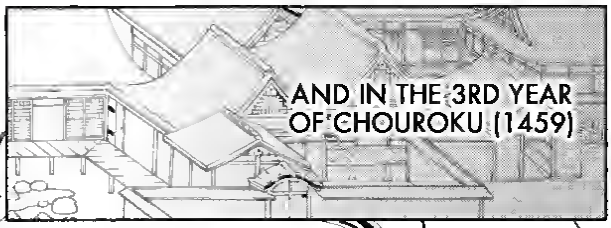
CHAPTER 8: ANOTHER TALE OF THE DEMON HINO TOMIKO

KEI KUSUNOKI

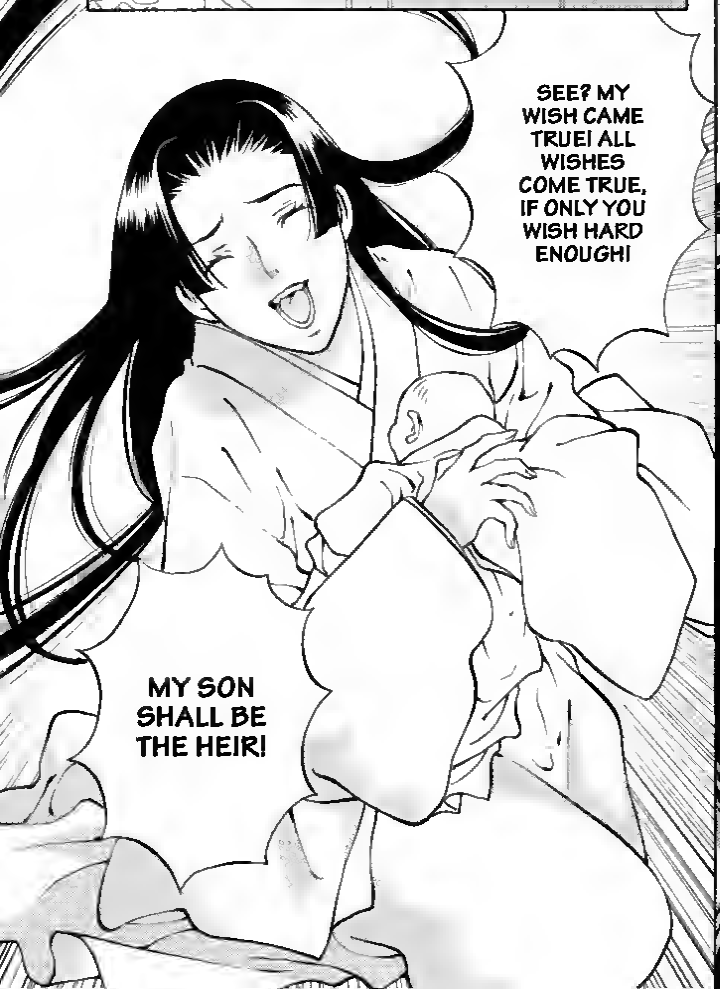
THERE IS NO WISH THAT WON'T COME TRUE IF YOU WANT IT BADLY ENOUGH.
WISHES ARE MEANT TO COME TRUE. WISH. SEEK. STEAL. GRAB. HOLD ON TIGHT.
NO MATTER HOW MANY CONCUBINES THE 8TH SHOGUN OF THE MUROMACHI SHOGUNATE, YOSHIMASA, ALREADY HAS...

I AM HIS WIFE! I WILL NOT LET ANY OF THOSE CONCUBINES DEFEAT ME!
I SAW A DEMON BEHIND HER.
ESPECIALLY NOT IMAMAIRI NO TSUBANE.
THAT WOMAN WAS ONCE HIS NURSE, AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME HIS CONCUBINE.
SHE IS POSSESSED BY A DEMON. SHE IS AN EVIL WOMAN, POSSESSED BY A DEMON!

MY LORD...


AND IN THE 3RD YEAR OF CHOUROKU (1459)

I, HIS WIFE, WILL BE THE ONE TO GIVE HIM A SON! I WILL MAKE MY WISH COME TRUE!


SEE? MY WISH CAME TRUE! ALL WISHES COME TRUE, IF ONLY YOU WISH HARD ENOUGH!
MY SON SHALL BE THE HEIR!

WHAT'S WRONG? WHY AREN'T YOU DRINKING YOUR MILK?
NO... NO, IT CAN'T BE!
いやあああ
NOOOOO!

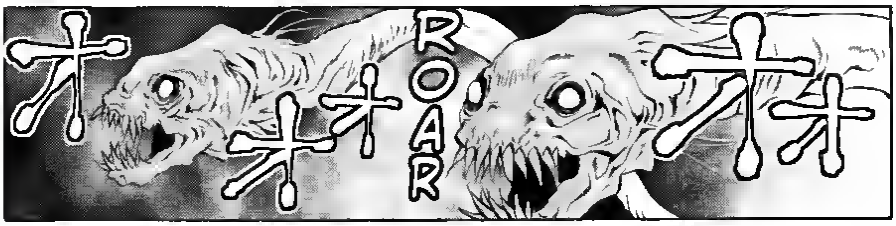
CALM DOWN, TOMIKO. OIMA WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
IT WAS OIMA'S SPELL! YOUR CONCUBINE KILLED MY SON WITH A CURSE!
NO... NO...
BANISH HER SOMEWHERE! PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU!
THERE IS NO WISH THAT WON'T COME TRUE IF YOU WANT IT BADLY ENOUGH.
THEN I'LL BANISH OIMA TO OKISHIMA, THE ISLAND ON LAKE BIWA.
YES, FINE.

IMAMAIRI NO TSUBANE, I WANT YOU TO DIE A HORRIBLE DEATH!
BANISH? NO... THAT'S NOT WHAT I REALLY WANT.
YOU KILLED MY SON!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR? YOU'RE THE DEMON I SAW WITH IMAMAIRI NO TSUBANE.
YOUR GREATER HATRED HAS DRAWN ME TO YOU.
MY NAME IS IBARAKI DOUJI. YOU ARE WORTHY OF BEING POSSESSED BY ME.

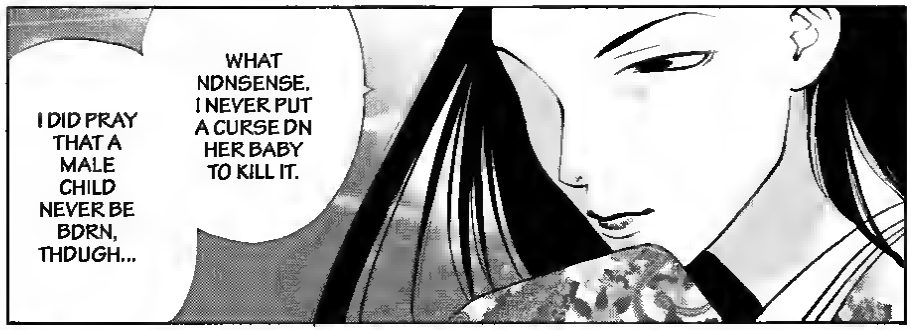
TO ESCAPE DETECTION BY THE ACCURSED CHILD OF THE GODS, WHO WIELDS THE BLADE ONIKIRIMARU THAT IS THE MORTAL ENEMY OF DEMONS...
...I HAD HIDDEN MYSELF IN THAT BLACK-HEARTED FEMALE. THE EVIL AURA OF A WOMAN DISGUISES MY OWN DEMONIC AURA.
NOW LET US CURSE MANKIND TOGETHER, HINO TOMIKO.
I ONLY WANT TO CURSE ONE PERSON. THAT WOMAN.

IMAMAIRI NO TSUBANEI I HOPE YOU DIE WITH YOUR ENTRAILS RIPPED FROM YOUR BODY!
BWAAAAH


ROAR

ARE YOU TRYING TO SWALLOW ME UP? CURSE YOU!
WHAT TERRIFYING EVIL ENERGY...

BIWA LAKE
– OKISHIMA
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOSHIMASA EXILED ME...
IMAMAIRI NO TSUBANEI DIE HORRIBLY!
I HOPE SOMEBODY KILLS YOU!


I DID PRAY THAT A MALE CHILD NEVER BE BORN, THOUGH...
WHAT NONSENSE. I NEVER PUT A CURSE ON HER BABY TO KILL IT.

ISN'T THAT SO, IBARAKI DOUJI?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE SHOGUN PROMISED TO CALL ME BACK WHEN THE TIME WAS RIGHT.
AND I HAVE A POWERFUL DEMON AS MY ALLY...
RUSTLE RUSTLE

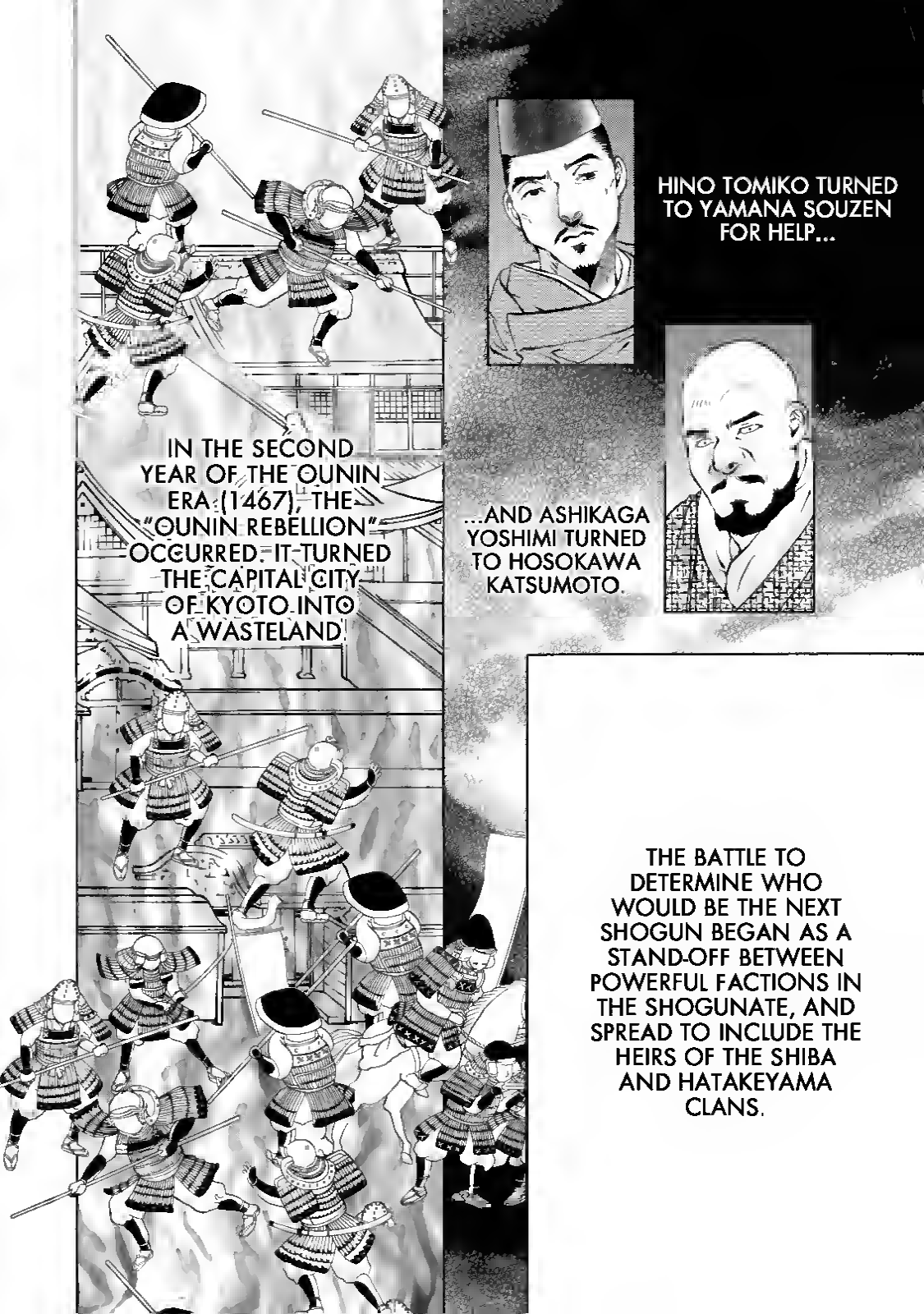
STAB
WHA-?

SPLUUURT
びしゃあ
LADY OIMA?
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
NOOO! LADY OIMA HAS COMMITTED SUICIDE BY SLITTING HER BELLY OPEN!

THERE IS NO WISH THAT WON'T COME TRUE IF YOU WANT IT BADLY ENOUGH!
WISHES ARE MEANT TO COME TRUE. WISH. SEEK. STEAL. GRAB. HOLD ON TIGHT.
SHE HAS ME! HINO TOMIKO...I YOU DON'T REALIZE IT, BUT YOU CAN COMMAND DEMONS! YOUR ENDLESS GREED IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COMMAND EVEN A DEMON!
THE TRUER ONE IS TO ONE'S OWN DESIRES, THE CLOSER ONE BECOMES TO A DEMON!

NOW THEN...
HWOOOOOO
DOES THIS EVIL AURA I SENSE FROM THE FLOWER PALACE BELONG TO A WOMAN... OR A DEMON?
OR SOMETHING MORE EVIL THAN A DEMON?

I WANT A SON. I WANT AN HEIR. IF I WISH HARD ENOUGH, IT WILL COME TRUE.
IN THE 3RD YEAR OF THE KANSHOU ERA (1462) AND THE 4TH YEAR OF THE KANSHOU ERA (1463), TOMIKO GIVES BIRTH TO GIRLS.
IN THE 5TH YEAR OF THE KANSHOU ERA (1464), YOSHIMASA LOSES PATIENCE AND DECLARES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, YOSHIMI, HIS HEIR.
IN THE 6TH YEAR OF THE KANSHOU ERA (1465), SHE GIVES BIRTH TO YOSHIHIRO.
SEE? MY WISH CAME TRUE! THIS CHILD IS THE HEIR!
I SHALL MAKE HIM SHOGUN NO MATTER WHAT!


IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE OUNIN ERA (1467), THE "OUNIN REBELLION" OCCURRED. IT TURNED THE CAPITAL CITY OF KYOTO INTO A WASTELAND.
HINO TOMIKO TURNED TO YAMANA SOUZEN FOR HELP...
...AND ASHIKAGA YOSHIMI TURNED TO HOSOKAWA KATSUMOTO.
THE BATTLE TO DETERMINE WHO WOULD BE THE NEXT SHOGUN BEGAN AS A STAND-OFF BETWEEN POWERFUL FACTIONS IN THE SHOGUNATE, AND SPREAD TO INCLUDE THE HEIRS OF THE SHIBA AND HATAKEYAMA CLANS.

A PARTICULAR PROBLEM WAS FOOT SOLDIERS, KNOWN AS ASHIGARU, WHO WERE MOSTLY LORDLESS SAMURAI AND FARMERS, HIRED AND BROUGHT IN TO FIGHT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. THEY HAD LITTLE LOYALTY AND QUICKLY TURNED TO BANDITRY, PUSHING THE CAPITAL INTO ANARCHY.
EEEK!
WAIT, YOU THERE!
YOU'VE HALF TURNED INTO DEMONS!

STAB
THOOM
SLITHER
WISH.
SEEK.
STEAL.
GRAB.
HOLD ON
TIGHT.

THE EVIL AURA DREW YOU IN, AND YOU FOLLOWED YOUR DESIRES INTO BECOMING A DEMON, HUH?
STAB!!!
HUH?
W-WE WERE BOTH KILLED, I THOUGHT!
ONIKIRIMARU IS A MYSTIC BLADE THAT ONLY CUTS THE FLESH OF DEMONS.

IF YOU HAVEN'T COMPLETELY BECOME A DEMON, IT WILL KILL AND PURIFY THE DEMONIC AURA WITHIN YOU.
AAHH!
HWOOOO
THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT. WEAK HUMANS ARE DRAWN IN AND BECOME DEMONS.
WHAT IS THIS GREEDY, EVIL ENERGY THAT SPREADS LIKE A PLAGUE?

WHO IS ITS HOST?
HWOOOO
HWOOOO
MOTHER...?

WISHES COME TRUE.
5TH YEAR OF THE BUNMEI ERA (1473): BOTH SOUZEN AND KATSUMOTO DIE OF ILLNESS.
YOSHI-MASA WANTS TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A CULTURED POET, AND RETIRES.
HINO TOMIKO'S SON, YOSHIHIRO, BECOME THE 9TH SHOGUN OF THE MUROMACHI SHOGUNATE.
WISH. SEEK. STEAL. GRAB. HOLD ON TIGHT.

WISH STRONGLY, AND YOUR WISH WILL ALWAYS COME TRUE!
TOMIKO.
I SHALL BECOME THE STAND-IN SHOGUN, AND WORK TO SECURE THE SHOGUNATE'S FINANCES.
AS SMALL-SCALE REBELLIONS DRAGGED ON ENDLESSLY, KATSUMITSU MADE HIGH-INTEREST LOANS AND INVESTMENTS TO THE VARIOUS DAIMYO AND BUILT HIMSELF A LARGE FORTUNE.
HINO TOMIKO'S BROTHER HINO KATSUMITSU

THE 8TH YEAR OF THE BUNMEI ERA (1476)
BROTHER, I THANK YOU. BUT I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP ANY MORE.
NO... I CAN DO JUST FINE WITHOUT YOU.
NO, I'D STILL LIKE TO-
I WON'T GIVE THE MONEY OR POWER TO ANYONE!
WISHES COME TRUE!
AAH! A DEMON!

GYAH!
SLICE
REST IN PEACE, BROTHER.
HELP!
CLANG

I'VE FINALLY FOUND YOU! YOU'RE THE SOURCE OF THE GREEDY, EVIL AURA!
WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
CLASH
HRGK!
HNNGH
ERRGH

EVEN IF YOU CUT ME DOWN, THESE MAD WARS WON'T STOP!
IBARAKI DOUJI! YOU SERVED SHUTEN DOUJI, WHO KILLED MY MOTHER!
WHAT?
YOU MAY THINK YOU HID YOURSELF IN THIS WOMAN, WITH HER STRANGE, EVIL AURA, BUT HER AURA ITSELF IS ALMOST DEMONIC NOW!
WISHES COME TRUE...
SO YOU'VE APPEARED, ACCURSED CHILD OF AN UN-WORSHIPPED GOD! WILL YOU SLAY ME? YOU DEMON-KILLER!

IBARAKI DOUJII KILL HIMI
BWAAAAH
HUH?!
HA HA HAI YOU'VE BEEN TRAPPED BY HER EVIL AURA, JUST LIKE MEI
HWOOOO

CLANG
BUT IF I GET TO USE THIS POWER TO KILL YOU, THEN I'M JUST FINE WITH THAT!
I AM NOW TOMIKO'S SERVANT, AND I CANNOT EVEN FIGHT WITHOUT HER PERMISSION.
IS THIS WOMAN REALLY...?
SHE DOESN'T KNOW IT, BUT HER DESIRES ARE SO STRONG THAT THEY GIVE HER THE POWER TO COMMAND DEMONS!
THAT'S RIGHT. THIS WOMAN IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THIS! SHE IS THE ONE SPREADING THIS EVIL AURA OF GREED!

HER EVIL AURA WILL SPREAD ACROSS THE ENTIRE LAND OF THE RISING SUN LIKE A PLAGUE! AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, AN ERA WILL COME WHEN MEN FIGHT MERELY TO FULFILL THEIR OWN GREEDY DESIRES!
AND ALL BECAUSE OF ONE GREEDY WOMAN!
BUT TOMIKO IS NOT A DEMON! HOW WILL YOU KILL HER WITH YOUR BLADE, WHICH CAN ONLY KILL DEMONS?
IF SHE IS A DEMON, I WILL KILL HER! AND IF SHE IS NOT...
I'LL JUST HAVE TO PURIFY HER WITH THE MYSTIC BLADE, ONIKIRI-MARU!
HISSSSS

I WILL PURIFY THE GREEDY, MALEVOLENT AURA THAT LURKS WITHIN YOUR SOUL!
STAY BACK! MY WISHES ALWAYS COME TRUE!
WISH. SEEK. STEAL.
GRAB. HOLD ON TIGHT.
SHIFTER

SLICE
FSSSSHH

NOW I'M FREE!
THE EVIL BONDS THAT HELD ME TO HINO TOMIKO ARE DISAPPEARING...

斬
SLASH!

GAH
I'VE NO DUTY TO PROTECT THE HUMANS WHO LET MY MOTHER DIE.
BUT I'VE NO INTENTION OF FORGIVING THE DEMONS WHO KILLED AND ATE MY MOTHER!
HEH HEH...
NO MATTER HOW MANY YOU PURIFY, THE NATURE OF HUMANITY REMAINS UNCHANGED.
DEMONS EAT HUMANS, BUT THEY ARE ALSO BORN FROM THEM...
IF YOU ARE A DEMON, I WILL KILL YOU! THAT IS ALL THERE IS TO IT.

THEN WAS HINO TOMIKO BORN A GREEDY, EVIL WOMAN?
SOMETIMES HUMANS BECOME DEMONS...
HNNGH...
I WON'T LET ANYONE HAVE IT...

I WON'T LET ANYONE HAVE THE MONEY OR POWER.
IT ALL BELONGS TO MY SON YOSHIHIRO...
TOMIKO BECOMES THE DE-FACTO RULER OF THE SHOGUNATE, AND IT IS SAID THAT SHE RULES OVER THE ENTIRE NATION.
TALES ARE TOLD THAT THE PEOPLE FORMED A LONG LINE, EACH BRINGING HER PRESENTS.
THE 8TH YEAR OF THE BUNMEI ERA (1476)

AN AGE OF CIVIL WAR, WHERE GREEDY MEN TOOK TERRITORY FROM ONE ANOTHER, HAD COME TO THE LAND.
IN THE PROVINCES, LOCAL LORDS AND PEASANTS BEGAN TO TAKE POWER AWAY FROM THEIR LEADERS.
THE 9TH YEAR OF THE BUNMEI ERA (1477) THE WARS IN KYOTO CAME TO AN END, BUT THE POWER OF THE MUROMACHI SHOGUNATE WAS FINISHED.
...BUT A MOTHER WHO WANTED HER SON TO BE HAPPY.
...NOR A SAMURAI...
THE CAUSE OF THE AGE OF CIVIL WARS WAS NOT A DEMON...
HOW TERRIFYING YOU ARE, HINO TOMIKO.
...BUT TO THINK HER LOVE FOR HER CHILD CAUSED HER TO BECOME SOMETHING MORE EVIL...
IF SHE HAD BECOME A DEMON I WOULD HAVE SLAIN HER...

THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU, ANOTHER TALE OF THE DEMON HINO TOMIKO - COMPLETE